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On the Use of Slurs in English Viol Music

Peter Farrell

One of the principal pleasures enjoyed by modern viol players is performing the English music for consort of viols, much of which was designed for domestic music making. A product of the Elizabethan (1558-1603) and Jacobean (1603-1625) periods, this distinguished repertory represents a musical tradition which continued in England through the middle of the seventeenth century. In performing this music of an earlier time, modern players are faced with the problem that there are no performance indications in the music. The composer has notated a structure of pitch and temporal relationships only, leaving to the performer the task of rendering this structure in terms of sound. The performer must make a number of decisions, for example concerning embellishment and patterns of articulation, which in later periods were made by the composer. The performer was, in fact, an active participant in the creative process. The division of responsibility between composer and performer is indicated by the subject matter in texts addressed to each. A work such as Thomas Morley's *A Plain and Easy Introduction to Practical Music* (1597) instructs in the art of composition, how to structure pitch and time relationships, whereas works such as Diego Ortiz' *Tratado de glosas* (1553) and Christopher Simpson's *The Division-Viol* (1659) instruct in the art of rendering a given text in terms of musical sound, how to bow, how to vary and embellish a basic structure.

One of the decisions which is in the province of the performer is whether to play each note of the text with a separate bow stroke, or whether to take two or several notes in the same stroke. The effect is quite different, and the decision to bow each note separately is just as much a musical decision as is the decision to bow two or more in one stroke. A twentieth century musician who has been carefully trained to play only what the composer has indicated may bring this attitude to the performance of music of an earlier time, and thus play no embellishments or slurred bowings just because the composer did not indicate any. On the other hand, he may try to discover the tradition of the performer in the earlier

period. The question is, were slurred bowings used by viol players during the period under consideration, and if so, where in the music might they have been used?

According to Robert Donington, "Actual slurs are a normal part of the technique of bowed instruments, and are to be used even in the music of periods at which it was not customary to show them at all."¹ To illustrate the point, Donington quotes Diego Ortiz. Even a work as late as Leopold Mozart's violin tutor (1756), in which the author makes an eloquent plea for the performer to play accurately what the composer has indicated, presents many pages of examples to show how notes written plain may be slurred by the performer.² Concerning the performance of the chamber music of Matthew Locke (1622-1677), Michael Tilmouth writes:

Slurred bowings were in general regarded as an ornament to be used at the player's discretion, but groups of two or three short notes were often slurred by Locke himself and such groups may have been slurred as a matter of course . . . it is probable that more slurs were added by performers, e.g. in cadences, notes of anticipation of the tonic were probably slurred with the preceding super-tonic and the whole figure treated as a written-out version of the ornament Simpson describes as a 'cadent'.³ (See Simpson's table of graces, below.)

Concerning the embellishment of sixteenth-century music, Howard Brown writes:

As the speed and complexity of ornaments increased toward the end of the century, string players had more need of legato bowing, in order to play *passagi* that moved too quickly for separate strokes, and in order to play accented notes with the weighted arm. By 1592, Rognioni regards grouping two or three notes under one bow as the normal procedure. Apparently, then, sixteenth-century instrumental music was performed entirely in a detached manner, with one bow- or tongue-stroke per note. The speed of improvised

¹ Robert Donington, *The Interpretation of Early Music*, New Version, London: Faber and Faber, 1974, p. 477.

² Leopold Mozart, *Versuch einer gründlichen Violinschule*, Augsburg, 1756, trans. E. Knecker, *A Treatise on the Fundamental Principles of Violin Playing*, London: Oxford University Press, 1948. Chapter VII, "Of the Many Varieties of Bowing."

³ Matthew Locke, *Chamber Music*, ed. Michael Tilmouth, *Musica Britannica*, XXXI, London: Stainer and Bell, 1971, xx, "Bowing."

ornamentation, though, prompted players to enlarge their techniques to include slurred groupings, a device, we may imagine, that was soon adopted for reasons of musical variety.⁴

Brown also quotes Diego Ortiz.

In *The History of Violin Playing*, David Boyden quotes Diego Ortiz and several Italian writers of the time. "Richardo Rognioni (the father, 1592) speaks of 'taking two notes in one bow stroke because one cannot make a diminution of any length if the bow does not claim its rights'.⁵ Rognioni 'mentions two notes in one bow stroke, but in connexion with establishing the correct bowing pattern.'⁶ "Cerreto (1601) indicates that in viol music, two, three, or four notes may be slurred in one bow stroke."⁷ In reference to a section titled "Instructions for bowing and slurring the bowed instruments" from a work by Francesco Rognoni (the son, 1620), Boyden writes: "For slurred bowings, Francesco Rognoni gives a special term, *lireggiare* and he furnishes examples that are both instructive and puzzling. In particular, there are slurs for groups of notes by 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12, and 15."⁸ Examples from Francesco Rognoni quoted by Boyden:⁹



Example 1. Francesco Rognoni

⁴ Howard Brown, *Embellishing Sixteenth-Century Music*, London: Oxford University Press, 1976, p. 70.

⁵ David Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing*, London: Oxford University Press, 1965, p. 164. Richardo Rognioni, *Passagi per potersi essercitare nel diminuire terminatamente con ogni sorte d'instromenti*, Venice, 1592.

⁶ Ibid., 78.

⁷ Ibid., 164. Scipione Cerreto, *Dalla prattica musica*, Naples, 1601.

⁸ Ibid., 164. Francesco Rognoni, *Selva de varii passaggi secondo l'uso moderno*, Milan, 1620.

⁹ Ibid., 165.

There is ample evidence uncovered by modern scholars to indicate that viol players of the period, as well as players of other bowed instruments, did use slurred bowings. The most useful source of information on this practice in sixteenth century viol playing is a passage from Diego Ortiz' *Tratado de glosas*, quoted in part by Donington, Brown and Boyden. Book I of Ortiz' treatise illustrates the use of *passos* or diminutions when polyphonic vocal compositions are played by a consort of viols. At the start of Book I, Ortiz writes a paragraph on the art of viol playing:

This book shows the way in which the notes are to be varied, but the charm and the effects to be made are in the person who plays, in playing sweetly that the voice may come out sometimes one way, sometimes another. Mixing some muted trills and some runs, may the bow hand not make strokes but draw the bow smoothly; and the left hand principally makes harmony. When there are two or three quarter notes in a row, may only the first be marked, and the others pass without taking a new bow stroke, as I have said, and because this can be shown; but because it is theoretical I leave it to the good judgement of the musician.¹⁰

In Ortiz' music, the half note represents the motor unit or pulse, so quarter notes are a division of the pulse. It is clear from this passage that Ortiz considers slurred bowing to be a primary expressive means in viol playing, and again, this refers to the performance of polyphonic compositions by a consort of viols.

The didactic works quoted above by Diego Ortiz, Richardo Rognioni, Scipione Cerreto and Francesco Rognoni were all published in Italy between 1553 and 1620. Can information from Italian sources be taken to apply to English musical practice of the same period? It is the only information we have; Italians published didactic works on playing bowed instruments at a time when the English did not. However, it is reasonable to believe that Italian musical practice was influential in England during this time. The English followed the Italian practice of performing vocal compositions on viols and using vocal models for instrumental compositions. In Italy compositions were designated *per cantare o sonare*,

¹⁰ Diego Ortiz, *Tratado de glosas sobre clausulas y otros puntos en la musica de violones*, Rome, 1553. Modern edition, Max Schneider, Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1967. English trans., Peter Farrell, *Journal of the Viola da Gamba Society of America*, IV (1967), 6.

in England "for Voyces or Violls." Italian musicians practiced their art in England, for example the Ferrabosco family, Alfonso Ferrabosco I in the service of Elizabeth, and his son Alfonso Ferrabosco II, a viol player, in the service of James I; and the Lupo family, active at the English court during this period, including Thomas Lupo I (d. 1628). Various English musicians traveled and studied in Italy, including John Cooper, (1570-1630), who not only composed in the Italian style but changed his name to Coperario. Alfonso Ferrabosco II, Thomas Lupo I, and John Coperario are among the outstanding composers of Jacobean consort music.

It may also be argued that conventions of bowing may have been international. Among hundreds of musical examples from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries printed in HAM with no slurs, there appears a long set of variations for keyboard by Samuel Scheidt (1624) containing a passage of several measures with slurred sixteenth notes, with an explanation by the composer: *Imitatio Violistica*.¹¹



Example 2. Samuel Scheidt

After the year 1650 didactic works treating viol playing, and the notation of slurs in musical manuscripts and in published music began to appear in England. The authors and composers represented belong to the second generation of English violists, those born during the time of Elizabeth or James I, but whose work reached maturity after that time. This material concerns solo viol playing, but by studying it one may gain an insight into the practice of viol bowing in seventeenth century England.

Christopher Simpson (1610-1669) in his *The Division-Viol* offers the most valuable information on the art of viol playing of any English source. Simpson treats slurs as a "gracing of notes . . . performed by the bow." "To these (bowed graces) may be added

¹¹ Archibald Davison and Willi Apel, *Historical Anthology of Music*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962, II, 26.

that of Playing two, three, four, or more Notes with one motion of the Bow, which would not have that Grace or Ornament if they were play'd severally." In Simpson's table of "Graces performed with the Fingers," all graces are marked with a slur: "The Notes which have an Arch or Stroke over or under them, are play'd with one motion of the Bow." His instructions for the performing of smooth graces: "Smooth is, when rising or falling a Tone or Semi-tone, we draw (as it were) the Sound from one Note to another, in imitation of the Voyce; and it is expressed by setting down or taking off the Finger a little after the touch of the Bow." At the end of the table, he comments: "To these may be added the *Gruppo*, *Trillo*, or any other Movement of the Voyce imitated on the Viol, by playing the like-moving Notes with one motion of the bow."¹²

Smooth graces

Beat. exp: Backfall exp: Double-Backfall exp: elevation.

exp Springer. exp: Cadent. exp: Backfall-shaked exp:

Shaked graces

Close Shake. exp: Shaked Beat. exp: elevation exp:

10 Cadent. exp: Double-Relish exp: or thus: exp: For these, I am obliged to the ever famous Charles Colman Doctor in Musick

Example 3. Christopher Simpson

In his own compositions Simpson generally notated only pitch and rhythm, leaving to the player the application of the graces. However, in the examples illustrating the text some slurs are notated. To illustrate "Breaking the Ground," the division of half

¹² Christopher Simpson, *The Division-Viol*, London, 1659. Facsimile of the second edition, London: J. Curwen & Sons, 1965, pp. 10-12.

notes into sixteenths is slurred. Other examples include graces which have been written out in note values, the beat, the backfall, and the cadent. The slurred notes are all in stepwise motion, of a duration shorter than the pulse, and are usually arranged so the forward bow stroke coincides with the strong note.

etc.

Example 4. Christopher Simpson

In *An Introduction to the Skill of Music*, first published in 1654, John Playford uses the same table of graces used by Simpson, a table made by Dr. Charles Colman. As in Simpson's work, all graces in the table are slurred. Concerning the slur Playford writes: "The second sort of tie is, when two or more Notes are to be Sung to one Syllable, or two notes or more to be plaid with once drawing the Bow on the Viol or Violin, as thus:"¹³

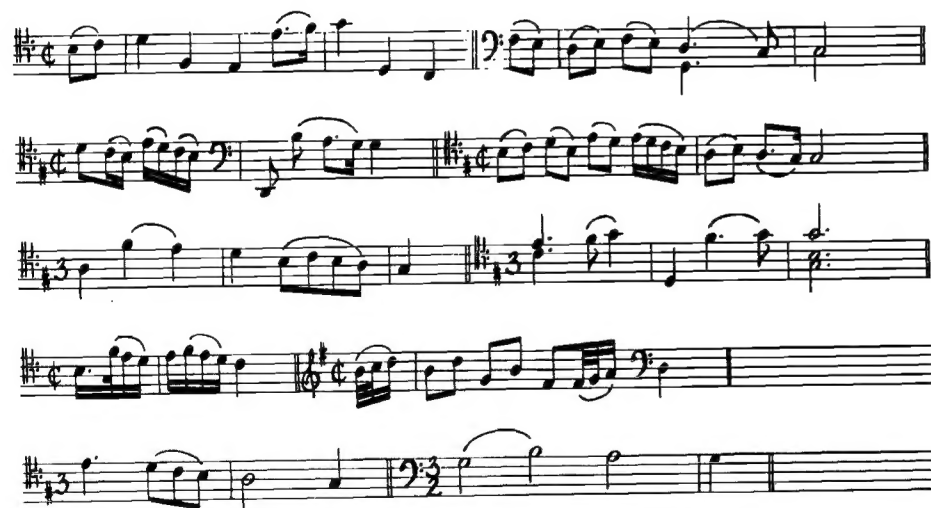
Thou art not kind but cruel

Example 5. John Playford

In *Musick's Monument* (1676), Thomas Mace (1613-1709) gives instruction both in lute playing and in viol playing. The viol player is instructed in the mechanics of bowing, but is referred to

¹³ John Playford, *An Introduction to the Skill of Music*, nineteen editions, 1654-1730. Seventh edition (London, 1674) facsimile, Ridgewood, N.J.: Gregg Press, 1966, pp. 35-36.

the section on lute playing for left hand technique, including graces. Again, all graces in the examples are slurred, and the slur itself is treated as a grace: "All Those, which are Hooped in, go under the Name of Slurr'd-Notes; only hitting the 1st and Falling the rest."¹⁴ (i.e. only the first note under the slur is struck by the right hand.) Mace's Chapters VIII and IX contain a number of short Preludes or Fancies with slurs carefully marked in the tablature. The second volume of the modern facsimile edition contains a number of compositions by Mace for viol solo from a manuscript in the Cambridge University Library. Unlike his contemporary, Christopher Simpson, Mace marks slurs extensively throughout his compositions. Despite the polyphonic texture, the style of melodic writing is quite vocal, approaching the mature style of the French violists of the late seventeenth century. Like Simpson, the slurred notes are generally stepwise, use note values shorter than the pulse unit, and are arranged so the forward bow stroke comes on the strong note. In Mace's compositions may be found written out versions of the beat, the back-fall, the double back-fall, the elevation, and the cadent (using Simpson's terminology), as well as short divisions filling in the interval of a third or a fifth, all slurred in the tablature.



Example 6. Thomas Mace

¹⁴ Thomas Mace, *Musick's Monument*, London, 1676. Facsimile edition, Paris: Éditions du Centre de la recherche scientifique, 1966, p. 108.

An interesting source of information on viol bowing practices in England is the Manchester Gamba Book,¹⁵ a manuscript collection of 258 pieces for viol solo by 38 composers who lived during the first half of the seventeenth century, including Alfonso Ferrabosco (1578-1628), John Jenkins (1592-1678), Simon Ives (1600-1662), William Laws (1602-1645), Christopher Simpson (1610-1669), and Dr. Charles Coleman (d. 1664). This manuscript also contains a table of "Graces on the Violl," in which all graces illustrated are marked with a slur, and containing the slur itself: "So many letters as are bound in with these markes must be slurde in one bowe." Some of the composers do not notate slurs in their music, others use them extensively. Here, a greater variety in the use of the slur is to be found. In a musical texture which mixes conjunct and disjunct melodic motion, typically conjunct notes are slurred whereas disjunct notes are taken with separate bow strokes. Bowings tend to be metric, with the strong note taken on the forward bow stroke. As in the music of Mace, the duration of the bow stroke tends to coincide with the motor unit, or pulse. Short notes are typically slurred with the preceding long note, but are on occasion slurred with the following long note, in the manner of English vocal music. Any written out figure which resembles a grace may be notated with a slur. (See Example 7, next page.)

The last composer of this period to write for consort of viols, Matthew Locke (1622-1677), frequently marks slurs in his compositions. The editor of Locke's chamber music for *Musica Britannica*, Michael Tilmouth, quoted above, believes it is appropriate to use even more slurs in Locke's music, specifically in the case of written out graces. The examples illustrate the use of a metrical bowing pattern, the weak note slurred with the strong; the opening of a Fantazie, in which the longer notes and leaps are taken with separate bow strokes, and the quicker stepwise notes are slurred; and a cadence embellishment, a written out division.

¹⁵ See: Elizabeth Cowling, "A Manuscript Collection of Viola da Gamba Music," *Journal of the Viola da Gamba Society of America*, I (1964), 16-29, and Frank Traficante, "The Manchester Lyra Viol Tablature," *Journal of the Viola da Gamba Society of America*, III (1966), 52-55.

Example 7. The Manchester Gamba Book

From the information presented thus far, it may be possible to derive a set of principles for the use of slurs in viol playing during this period. In general, notes of longer duration and notes separated by leaps are bowed with a separate stroke for each, whereas notes of shorter duration moving stepwise may be grouped together by slurs. Characteristically the bow stroke, which is itself a large motor action, coincides with the felt motor unit of the music, the pulse. Thus, any note with a duration as long as or longer than this unit normally requires a new bow stroke, whereas notes of shorter duration, especially those moving stepwise, may be grouped together by a slur. The quicker the notes, the more likely they will be slurred together. Graces are invariably slurred, in singing and in lute playing as well as in viol playing. Graces written out as notes are normally slurred in viol playing. Divisions of longer tones, which are invariably sung to one syllable in vocal music, may or may not be slurred by the viol player, as a matter of choice. Character-

Example 8. Matthew Locke

istically, decorative tones, such as short or weak tones between two longer or stronger tones, ornamental resolutions to suspensions, and cadence embellishments, are grouped together by a slur, tones "which would not have that Grace or Ornament if they were played severally."

The musical examples from which the foregoing principles are derived, being from the solo viol repertory, often are instrumental in character and have metric rhythms derived from the dance, whereas the melodic lines in Elizabethan and Jacobean viol consort music were vocal in nature, and the rhythms often free additive rhythms. However, the bowing patterns found in this later music are in many ways similar to the patterns of articulation found in the vocal music of the earlier period. At a time when slurs were never marked in instrumental parts, patterns of articulation in vocal music were indicated by the composer by the setting of the text. The difference in a syllabic setting, one note for each syllable, and a melismatic setting, two or more notes for each syllable, is basically the same as the difference in detached bowing and slurred bowing.

Can patterns of articulation in vocal music be taken as a model for bowing? David Boyden writes:

When the violin exactly doubles long vocal melismas or echoes them, it is tempting to consider slurring the violin part to the corresponding vocal syllabification. However, no contemporary treatise mentions such a possibility and the length of such a slur as that on the syllable 'Glo-' in Ex. 28 would seem to rule out this possibility for any music louder than *piano*.¹⁶

It is true that the bow cannot comfortably sustain a sound as long as a singer can sing one vowel. Vocal malismas are sometimes longer than the normal duration for a bow stroke, and a violist playing this same part would need to change his bow on a convenient note without disturbing the flow of the sound. There is another difference in vocal text setting and viol bowing, in that a string player normally takes a new bow stroke on a long sound, whereas in Renaissance vocal polyphony a syllable normally ends on a long sound, the new syllable starting on the following short sound. In spite of these practical differences, the vocal melisma is equivalent in effect to slurred bowing. John Playford, in the passage quoted above, treats the vocal slur and the bowed slur as being the same thing and uses one example to illustrate both. Jean Rousseau writes:

The tie consists in slurring with one stroke of the bow all the notes that are contained therein . . . in *Airs* made for singing, the eighths and sixteenths have no other ties than those that connect their tails, which have to be observed on the viol only in as much as the spirit of the song demands it, and the bow stroke permits it.¹⁷

Whether or not the viol player should play slurs is left to the judgement of the player, depending on the musical effect and the practicability of bowing.

There is every indication that viol players did imitate the vocal effect. In 1628 Monteverdi wrote Struggio: "the viol imitates the voice in all its modulations."¹⁸ As quoted above, Simpson wrote: "We draw (as it were) the Sound from one Note to an-

¹⁶ Boyden, op. cit., 164.

¹⁷ Jean Rousseau, *Traité de la Viole*, Paris, 1687, pp. 103-104.

¹⁸ Henry Prunières, *Monteverdi*, trans. Marie Mackie, Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1973, p. 80.

other, in imitation of the Voyce," and refers to "any other Movement of the Voyce imitated on the Viol, by playing the like moving Notes with one motion of the Bow." Mersenne in 1636 wrote:

if instruments are prized in proportion as they imitate the voice . . . then it seems impossible to refuse the prize to the viol, which resembles the voice in all its inflections . . . there is nothing more ravishing after good voices than these dying strokes of the bow, which accompany the ornaments made on the fingerboard.¹⁹

In England in particular, there was an intimate connection between vocal music and viol music during the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods. Composers who wrote for voices wrote for viols, and published music was typically designated for either: William Byrd, *Psalms, Songs, and Sonnets* (1611), "Fit for Voyces or Viols;" Orlando Gibbons, *Madrigals and Mottets* (1612), "Apt for Viols and Voyces;" or Michael East, *Pastorals, Anthems, Neopolitans, Fancies, and Madrigals* (1610), "Apt both for Viols and Voyces." Many of John Coperario's fantasias were originally madrigals.²⁰ Gibbons' popular madrigal "The Silver Swan" can be found as an instrumental piece in many manuscript collections.²¹ Instrumental dances which have been set with words may be found among John Dowland's part-songs.²² A type of composition particular to the English was the consort song, polyphonic music usually for one voice and four viols, by Byrd, Gibbons, East and others.²³ Fantasias for viols were in effect instrumental motets or madrigals, modeled after the vocal compositions of the time. If viols played vocal music, and if the ideal in viol playing was to imitate the movements and inflections of the voice, then it is reasonable to believe that vocal slurs may have been observed by viol players.

¹⁹ Marin Mersenne, *Harmonie Universelle*, Paris, 1636, quoted by Donington, op. cit., 527.

²⁰ Bruce Bellingham, Review of *John Coperario* by Richard Charteris, *Journal of the Viola da Gamba Society of America*, XV (1978), 113.

²¹ Ernst Meyer, *English Chamber Music*, London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1946, p. 125.

²² John Dowland, *Ayres for Four Voices*, ed. Thurston Dart and Nigel Fortune, *Musica Britannica*, VI, London: Stainer and Bell, 1970, Preface.

²³ See: Craig Monson, "Consort Song and Verse Anthem: A Few Performance Problems," *Journal of the Viola da Gamba Society of America*, XII (1976), 4-11.

The principles for the use of slurs in vocal music are similar to those for viol playing. Longer note values are more apt to be syllabic, whereas moving notes are more apt to be melismatic. Graces and divisions are always sung to one syllable. In the classical style of the Roman School, each syllable was set to a note value of a half note (one pulse) or longer. Durations of shorter value were melismatic, except that a weak syllable could be set with a weak quarter note:



English madrigalists were freer in

Ky-ri-e.

their text setting, but these classical principles may be observed in the vocal works of William Byrd and Thomas Morley.²⁴ In the following example, the opening of a canzonet from Morley's *The First Booke of Canzonets to Two Voyces* (1595), the long tones and leaps are set each note to a syllable, while the quicker stepwise notes following are melismatic, a procedure used throughout this work. This procedure is consonant with the principles of viol bowing discussed above. In the fantasies for two viols which Morley included with the canzonets, many points of imitation are structured in this same way, but of course there are no slurs because it was not customary for a composer to mark them. The patterns used by Morley in the vocal settings may serve as a model for bowing in the fantasies, with the difference that the melismas are often too long for a bow stroke, so the violist will need to take more strokes. An application of these principles to a fantasy for viols, with the slurs marked by the composer, can be observed in the example by Matthew Locke, quoted above.



Example 9. Thomas Morley

²⁴ Thomas Morley in particular was thoughtful about the problem of text setting, and wrote at some length on the "rules to be observed in ditting" in his *A Plain and Easy Introduction to Practical Music*, London, 1597.

A second example illustrates a favorite cadence formula, used by Morley in the vocal canzonets and the instrumental fantasies alike. In the vocal settings, this cadence formula is invariably melismatic, a clear indication of how the composer intended it to be performed.



Example 10. Thomas Morley

A few more examples may illustrate appropriate adaptations of vocal melismas to instrumental performance. The song in four parts by John Dowland, "The lowest trees have tops," from *The Third and Last Booke of Songs or Aires* (1603), was intended to be sung, played on viols, or sung and played. It would be appropriate for viol players to follow the vocal slurs. The quiet dignity of movement in this lovely song would be disturbed by a series of short separate strokes. Similar patterns of slurring may be found in the fantasias of John Jenkins, a composer of the next generation, marked by the composer.



Example 11. John Dowland

The example by William Byrd (1543-1623) is from a consort song, "Ye sacred muses,"²⁵ for voice and four viols. The style of writing for the viols is exactly the same as for the voice, and there is imitation between voice and viols throughout. Again it would be appropriate for the viols to follow the style of the vocal line, and slur the quarter notes. Detached bowing would be inconsistent with the vocal writing and contrary to the mood of the song, an elegy for Thomas Tallis. Examples of imitation between voice and viol with the patterns slurred the same way in both parts by the composer may be found in the works of a later composer, Henry Lawes (1596-1662).²⁶



Example 12. William Byrd

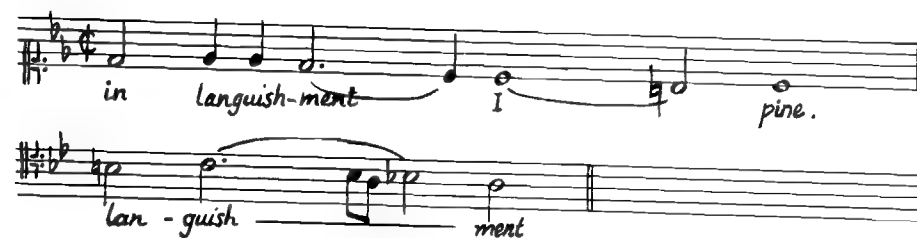
The examples by Orlando Gibbons, from *The First Set of Madrigals and Motets* (1612), were originally consort songs, the viol parts were later set with text.²⁷ From this setting we may have a suggestion for appropriate bowing. The first song, "Ne'er let the sun," illustrates the typical 'pathetic' figure, two notes falling step-

²⁵ William Byrd, *Consort Songs*, ed. Philip Brett, *The Collected Works of William Byrd*, XV, London: Stainer and Bell, 1970, p. 117.

²⁶ Henry Lawes, *The Treasury of Music: Containing Ayres and Dialogues to Sing to the Theorbo-Lute or Basse-Viol*, London: John Playford, 1669.

²⁷ Orlando Gibbons, *The First Set of Madrigals and Mottets of 5 Parts: apt for Viols and Voyces*, London, 1612, ed. Edmund Fellows, rev. Thurston Dart, *The English Madrigalists*, V, London: Stainer and Bell, 1964, Reviser's Note.

wise joined by a slur, found in centuries of Western music. The ornamental resolution of a suspension particularly was always slurred.



Example 13. Orlando Gibbons

The second example illustrates vocal slurs similar to slurs found in viol music, from "The Silver Swan," a madrigal often found in instrumental collections.



Example 14. Orlando Gibbons

In conclusion, slurred bowing has been in use as long as people have written descriptions of viol playing. It is found in all treatises dealing with viol techniques, it is a basic means to give variety in musical presentation, to unify notes in a group, and to add grace to viol playing. There is no way to determine definitively how slurs must be applied in every situation, because the slur was considered a grace, an artistic device, to be applied by the performer at his own discretion. We can gain some insight into the use of slurs by studying didactic works and by studying musical compositions in which patterns of articulation are indicated. But to assume that the English music for consort of viols should all be played with separate bow strokes, merely because the composer marked no slurs in the music, would seem contrary to the musical practice of the time.

Possibilities for Mean-Tone Temperament Playing on Viols

Frederick K. Gable

Intonation in viola da gamba playing is a crucial factor for good performance, especially in consort music where the harmonious blending of the separate instruments is the musical ideal. Good or bad intonation in viol performance is as noticeable as in krumphorn and other reed instrument playing because of the prominent overtones and reedy tone quality. Perfectly in tune intervals or chords sound and feel stable and locked-in, while the discordant, unstable beating of imperfectly tuned sonorities jars the ear. "When it's good, it's very good, but when it's bad, it's horrid!" Every consort viol player has experienced those special moments when a certain chord seemed especially well in tune, and other moments (more frequently?) when few chords seemed in tune. The well-in-tune chords occurred because the notes corresponded closely to the pitches of just or pure intervals, especially the interval between the root and third of the chord. In the equal temperament system in which we assume we are playing this interval of a third departs the farthest from pure intonation and causes the triads or chords to sound less pure. To produce more of those special well-in-tune moments is the goal of every consort player, but we often proceed by blind trial-and-error methods of adjusting open strings and frets, checking harmonics, testing certain chords and intervals, etc. Sometimes improvement of consort intonation results, but we do not know why or how the improvement was achieved and are unable to duplicate the same improved intonation at the next playing session without the same trial-and-error procedure. Or, we may notice that when we begin to play another piece in a different key our good intonation has disappeared and we go through the adjusting procedure again.

It is possible to change this situation and to achieve consistently better consort intonation by other than time-consuming trial-and-error means. The most important initial requirement for improvement is that each player gains some knowledge of systems of tuning and temperament and develops an increased aural sen-

sitivity to the subtle but apparent differences between these systems. A second basic requirement is that the consort instruments be in excellent condition: fresh strings, nut and bridge perfectly parallel, bridge curvature matched to fingerboard, proper clearance between strings and fingerboard, etc. The following suggestions will be of little use if these requirements are not met.

Most of the viol consort literature up to Purcell was composed when varieties of mean-tone temperament were in wide use, especially for keyboard instruments, and the need for equal temperament had not yet developed. Other instruments or voices in an ensemble adjusted their pitches to this mean-tone temperament or, without a keyboard instrument, performed in an even more perfect temperament, just intonation. The most common variety of mean-tone temperament was the $\frac{1}{4}$ -comma mean-tone temperament first described by Pietro Aaron in 1523.¹ Aaron's temperament is based on pure or natural thirds (the fourth partial in the overtone series) and slightly flat fifths arranged so that the fifths C-G, G-D, D-A, and A-E are each $\frac{1}{4}$ of a syntonic comma narrower than pure fifths, but the thirds C-E, F-A, G-B, D-F sharp, E flat-G, E-G sharp, A-C sharp and B flat-D are pure.² Since we are used to slightly flat fifths from equal temperament (not as flat as in mean-tone), the presence of the pure third in a mean-tone temperament triad creates a strikingly more consonant, stable, purely in tune triad than in equal temperament. In the following table the flatter fifths in equal and mean-tone temperament and the pure thirds of just intonation and mean-tone temperament can be seen by comparing the frequencies of the e' and g' pitches. The main advantage of mean-tone temperament is that the major triads on C, D, E, E flat, F, G, A, and B flat have pure thirds and thus sound more purely in tune than those triads in equal tempera-

¹ Pietro Aaron, *Il Toscanello in Musica* (Venice, 1523), Bk. II, Ch. XLI. English trans. Peter Bergquist (Colorado Springs: Colorado Springs College Music Press, 1970). See the discussion in J. Murray Barbour, *Tuning and Temperament: A Historical Survey*, 2nd ed. (East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State College Press, 1953, p. 26.

² The syntonic comma (not the same as the Pythagorean comma) is the amount of acoustical error between a series of four pure fifths (C-G-D-A-E) and two octaves plus a pure third, the third in the overtone series equal to about $\frac{1}{9}$ of an equal-tempered whole tone.

Mean-tone		pure thirds 5:4	Just Int.	pure fifth 3:2	Equal Temp.
g'	388.8		390		389.6
e'	325		325		327.6
c'	260		260		260

ment, in spite of the flatter fifths. The main disadvantage of this temperament is that accidentals are not enharmonic, i.e., C sharp does not equal D flat, E flat does not equal D sharp, etc., and if so used will sound very much out of tune. The flats will sound too low, the sharps too high, due to the two sizes of semitones in mean-tone temperament. This limits the keys in which we may play to those with two sharps or two flats in the signature, and allows for no enharmonic accidentals. But for most of the viol consort music which we play this is not a problem, since the main accidentals are C sharp, E flat, F sharp, G sharp, and B flat and signatures beyond two sharps and two flats are rare. A brief look through your library of viol consort music will reveal that other accidentals occur quite infrequently. Viol fingerboard diagrams in the well-known treatises

FOURTH BOOK OF STRING INSTRUMENTS

TABLE 29. Fingerboard of the Viol.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	D la re sol	b	e mi la	f fa ut	#	g re sol	#	a mi la re
2	A mi la re	b fa	B mi	c sol ut fa	#	d la re sol	#	e mi la
3	E mi la	F ut fa	#	g re sol	#	a mi la re	B fa	B b mi
4	C sol ut fa	#	d la re sol	B b	e mi la	f ut fa	#	g re sol
5	G re sol ut	#	a mi la re	B fa	#	c sol	#	d la re
6	D la re sol	b	e mi la	f ut fa	#	g re sol	#	a mi la
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

Mersenne, *Harmonie Universelle*, corrected diagram.

of Mersenne (1636), Rousseau (1687), and Danoville (1687)³ show only these five accidentals for the fretted notes on the viol, even though each writer recognized in his text the enharmonic use of some frets. Some of the more frequently occurring enharmonics (most notably D sharp and A sharp) will be discussed later, but for now, special pieces which contain many accidentals and enharmonics should probably be played in equal temperament or possibly were intended to sound somewhat out of tune for expressive or unusual effect.⁴ For most viol consort music, though, we do not need these other accidentals, so why should we tune and set our instruments for notes we do not need to play, especially since the notes we do need will be less purely in tune because of our equal temperament compromise? If we can play consort viol music in mean-tone temperament more of those special well-in-tune moments will occur and make our total performance sound much better.

If we now consider a common method of tuning a viol, we discover that we often tune the intervals between the open strings in the opposite direction from mean-tone temperament: between the outer strings we usually tune perfect fourths (and thus perfect fifths) and a sharp or wide third between the third and fourth strings, thus putting the whole comma in one interval. Then we play fretted notes at equally proportionate distances along each string. The resulting temperament is no standard temperament at all, although it is similar to Pythagorean temperament. Frequency Chart No. 1 below shows the fretted-note frequencies that result from that tuning. Notice the few actual unisons or perfect octaves.

³ Marin Mersenne, *Harmonie Universelle* (Paris, 1636): *The Books on Instruments*, trans. Roger Chapman (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1957), p. 262; Jean Rousseau, *Traité de la Viole* (Paris, 1687), repr. ed. (Amsterdam: Antiqua, 1965), p. 40f.; Gordon J. Kinney, "Danoville's Treatise on Viol Playing," *Journal of the Viola da Gamba Society of America* XII (1975), p. 58.

⁴ For example, the two hexachord fantasias by Alfonso Ferrabosco II in *Jacobean Consort Music*, Vol. IX of *Musica Britannica* (London: Stainer and Bell, 1955), pp. 32-34 and 62-64, or near the end of Giovanni Coperario's Fantasia, pp. 53-55 of the same volume.

Frequency Chart No. 1

Equal temperament fret placement.
Open strings tuned to pure fourths and a wide third.

Fret Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Frequency Ratio	1.0595	1.1225	1.1892	1.2599	1.3348	1.4142	1.4983
d'' 585.1	e ^b '' 619.9	e'' 656.8	f'' 695.8	f#'' 737.2	g'' 781.0	g#'' 827.4	a'' 876.7
a' 438.8	b ^b ' 464.9	b' 492.6	c'' 521.8	c#'' 552.8	d'' 585.7	d#'' 620.6	e'' 657.5
e' 329.1	f' 348.7	f#' 369.4	g' 391.4	g#' 414.6	a' 439.3	a#' 465.4	b' 493.1
c' 260.0	c#' 275.5	d' 291.9	e ^b ' 309.2	e' 327.6	f' 347.0	f#' 367.7	g' 389.6
g 195.0	g# 206.6	a. 218.9	b ^b 231.9	b 245.7	c' 260.3	c#' 275.8	d' 292.2
d 146.3	e ^b 155.0	e 164.2	f 174.0	f# 184.3	g 195.3	g# 206.9	a 219.2

*Decimal equivalent of ratio of open string length to stopped string length, which when multiplied by frequency of open string gives frequency of stopped note.

Thus we think we are tuning to play in equal temperament, but in reality we are tuning in no theoretically recognized temperament. A punster would appropriately term this the "vile" temperament!

Better results are obtained if we tune each open string to the fretted unison on the next lower string, producing equal-tempered (slightly sharp) fourths and a third between the open strings. See Frequency Chart No. 2 below.

Frequency Chart No. 2

Equal temperament fret placement.
Open strings tuned to fretted unisons (equal tempered fourths and third).

Fret Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Frequency Ratio	1.0595	1.1225	1.1892	1.2599	1.3348	1.4142	1.4983
d'' 583.7	e ^b '' 618.4	e'' 655.2	f'' 694.1	f#'' 735.4	g'' 779.1	g#'' 825.5	a'' 874.6
a' 437.3	b ^b ' 463.3	b' 490.9	c'' 520.0	c#'' 551.0	d'' 583.7	d#'' 618.4	e'' 655.2
e' 327.6	f' 347.1	f#' 367.7	g' 389.6	g#' 412.7	a' 437.3	a#' 463.3	b' 490.8
c' 260.0	c#' 275.5	d' 291.9	e ^b ' 309.2	e' 327.6	f' 347.0	f#' 367.7	g' 389.6
g 194.8	g# 206.4	a. 218.7	b ^b 231.7	b 245.4	c' 260.0	c#' 275.5	d' 291.9
d 145.9	e ^b 154.6	e 163.8	f 173.5	f# 183.8	g 194.8	g# 206.3	a 218.6

This tuning method gives a good version of equal temperament for our tuned viol, but, since this temperament was invented or developed for enharmonic accidentals, transposition to any pitch level, and for playing in keys that rarely occur in most of our viol consort music, our playing still does not sound as well in tune as it could.

How can we do otherwise, you may ask, since many early treatises describe and support this type of playing on fretted string instruments? For instance:

The viol and lute have been played (tuned) with equal semitones ever since their invention. Today one can play any mode on any fret, . . . (Vicentino)⁵

The lute and the viols sound two equal semitones, that is, a tone divided into two equal semitones . . . (Bottrigari)⁶

Gambas and especially lutes, of course, afford all chromatic tones; yet their tuning is not as pure and true as that of a harpsichord of this kind [the chromatic harpsichord with 19 strings and keys to the octave]. This is because the frets on gambas and lutes are all equally spaced . . . (M. Praetorius)⁷

Bottrigari and Vicentino describe in detail how the notes of fretted instruments do not match those of the keyboard instruments (harpsichord or organ) because of the differences between the mean-tone tuning of the keyboard instruments and the equal semitone tuning of the lute and viol. But Bottrigari and Praetorius also say that good players know how to alter the pitches of the fretted notes so that good intonation is achieved:

The stable but alterable instruments are all those which can be changed, augmented or diminished in some degree, according to the good judgment of the player as he touches their frets a little

⁵ Nicola Vicentino, *L'Antica Musica Riddotta alla Moderna Prattica* (Rome, 1555), fol. 146v as translated by Stanley Buetens, "On Fretting a Lute," *Journal of the Lute Society of America* III (1970), p. 62.

⁶ Hercole Bottrigari, *Il Desiderio* (Venice, 1594), trans. Carol MacClintock (Rome?: American Institute of Musicology, 1962), p. 17.

⁷ Michael Praetorius, *Syntagma Musicum II: De Organographia*, trans. Harold Blumenfeld (New Haven: Yale University, 1949), p. 65.

higher or a little lower. This occurs with the lute and viol, even though they may have the stability of their frets. (Bottrigari)⁸

... the player can influence the pitch of the strings by the position of his fingers on the frets. (M. Praetorius)⁹

In these instances the altering of the pitch is done to make the viol or lute pitches agree with those of the keyboard instrument, that is, to produce pitches in mean-tone temperament.

Thus, we arrive at the first method of playing in mean-tone temperament on viols: alter or adjust the pitch of those notes which are not purely produced on the frets by rolling the finger higher or lower on the frets. The most important adjustment for mean-tone playing is to lower the pitch of thirds of triads to create a pure third interval between the root and the third of the triad. In the following example from M. Praetorius's *Terpsichore* (1612)¹⁰ thirds of triads to be played lower in pitch are indicated by small arrows above the notes.

The number of notes to be adjusted seems to be quite large and adjusting thirds of triads that would normally be played on open strings requires an alternate fingering of those notes. If one wished also to raise the fifths of triads to produce just intonation playing then even more adjustments in fingering must be made.

Since there needs to be so much adjustment of pitches to produce purer intonation why not permanently change the positions of the frets so that continual adjustment is not necessary? Are there other systems of fret placement on string instruments that would give more satisfactory results? Instructions for fret placement on string instruments appear in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century treatises beginning with Hans Gerle in 1532.¹¹ Following the lead of Stanley Buetens¹² and Eugene Dombois¹³ it is possible

⁸ Bottrigari, p. 15.

⁹ Praetorius, p. 66.

¹⁰ Michael Praetorius, *Terpsichore* (1612), Vol. XV of *Gesamtausgabe der Musikalischen Werke* (Wolfenbüttel: Mösseler Verlag, 1929?), p. 75.

¹¹ Hans Gerle, *Musica Teusch* (Nuremberg, 1532).

¹² Stanley Buetens, "On Fretting a Lute," p. 61.

¹³ Eugene Dombois, "Correct and Easy Fret Placement," *Journal of the Lute Society of America* VI (1973), pp. 30-32; and "Varieties of Meantone Temperament Realized on the Lute," *Journal of the Lute Society of America* VII (1974), pp. 82-89.

Courant Sarabande.

M. Praetorius

↓ = thirds of triads to be lowered from equal temperament pitch

to represent various fret placement systems by a series of numerical factors which will give nut-to-fret distances when multiplied by the sounding string length of any fretted instrument. The accom-

Comparison of Fret Placement System

The upper number in each box is the fret factor.
The lower number is the fret distance in cm. for a string length of 50 cm. (rounded to the nearest .05 cm or 1/2 mm.)

Fret Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Equal ^a temperament	.056 2.8	.109 5.45	.159 7.95	.206 10.3	.251 12.55	.293 14.65	.333- 16.65
Mean-tone ^b temperament	.065 3.25	.106 5.3	.164 8.2	.200 10.0	.252 12.6	.284 14.2	.331 16.55
Gerle ^c (1532)	.061 3.05	.111 5.55	.162 8.1	? ?	.250 12.5	? ?	.333 16.65
Ganassi ^d (1543)	.051 2.55	.111 5.55	.156 7.8	.209 10.45	.250 12.5	.294 14.7	.333 16.65
Arriola ^e (1545)	.062 3.1	.111 5.55	.166 8.3	.210 10.5	.250 12.5	.296 14.8	.333 16.65
Bermudo I ^f (1555)	.064 3.2	.111 5.55	.156 7.8	.210 10.5	.250 12.5	.298 14.9	.333 16.65
Bermudo II ^g (1555)	.052 2.6	.107 5.35	.156 7.8	.203 10.15	.250 12.5	.289 14.45	.330 16.5
Galilei ^h (1581)	.056 2.8	.108 5.4	.158 7.9	.205 10.25	.249 12.45	.291 14.55	.330 16.5
Dowland ⁱ (1610)	.061 3.05	.111 5.55	.152 7.6	.201 10.05	.250 12.5	.292 14.6	.333 16.65

Notes to Diagram of Comparison

^a Buetens, p. 61; agrees with Mersenne, p. 258.

^b Dombois, "Varieties of Meantone," p. 84; Aaron in Bergquist's translation, Vol. III, pp. 10-11; and Barbour, p. 26. Dombois also gives a modified 1/6-comma meantone.

^c Gordon J. Kinney, "Fray Juan Bermudo's Methods of Measuring Frets," *Journal of the Viola da Gamba Society of America* XI (1974), p. 100.

^d Silvestro Ganassi, *Regola Rubertina: Lettione Seconda* (Venice, 1543), facs. ed. (Bologna: Forni, 1970), Chs. 4-6, as interpreted and computed in Richard D. Bodig, "Silvestro Ganassi's *Regola Rubertina*: Revelations and Questions," *Journal of the Viola da Gamba Society of America* XIV (1977), p. 67. Barbour, p. 143, Bol, p. 12, and Kinney, "Bermudo," p. 100, neglect Ganassi's instructions to make further fret adjustments when

panying diagram graphically compares fret placements for equal temperament and mean-tone temperament with those from early treatises.

Most of the early fret placement systems preserve the pure fourth and fifth of Pythagorean temperament (fifth and seventh frets, string ratios of 4:3 and 3:2) and the 9:8 whole tone (second fret). The placement of the other frets seems to be remarkably varied; some systems approach equal temperament, but none ap-

Frequency Chart No. 3

Mean-tone temperament fret placement.
Open strings tuned to fretted unisons (sharp fourths and pure thirds).

Fret Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Frequency Ratio	1.0700	1.1180	1.1963	1.2500	1.3375	1.3975	1.4953
d ^b 581.4	e ^b 622.1	e ^b 650.0	f ^b 695.5	f [#] 726.8	g ^b 777.6	g [#] 812.5	a ^b 869.4
a ^b 434.7	b ^b 465.1	b ^b 486.0	c ^b 520.0	c [#] 543.4	d ^b 581.4	d [#] 607.5	e ^b 650.0
e ^b 325.0	f ^b 347.8	f [#] 363.4	g ^b 388.8	g [#] 406.3	a ^b 434.7	a [#] 454.2	b ^b 486.0
c ^b 260.0	(d ^b) 278.2	d ^b 290.7	e ^b 311.0	e ^b 325.0	f ^b 347.8	f [#] 363.4	g ^b 388.8
g ^b 194.4	(a ^b) 208.0	a ^b 217.3	b ^b 232.6	b ^b 243.0	c ^b 260.0	c [#] 271.7	d ^b 290.7
d ^b 145.3	e ^b 155.5	e ^b 162.4	f ^b 173.8	f [#] 181.6	g ^b 194.3	g [#] 203.1	a ^b 217.3
g ^b (tenor) 388.8	(a ^b) 416.0	a ^b 434.7	b ^b 465.1	b ^b 486.0	c ^b 520.0	c [#] 543.3	d ^b 581.4
b (tenor) 243.0	c ^b 260.0	c [#] 271.7	d ^b 290.7	(d [#]) 303.8	e ^b 325.0	(e [#]) 339.6	f ^b 363.4
f (tenor) 173.8	(g ^b) 186.0	g ^b 194.3	(a ^b) 207.9	a ^b 217.3	b ^b 232.5	b ^b 242.9	c ^b 259.9

○ = problem notes

Notes to Diagram of Comparison

(Continued from preceding page)

tuning the open strings; see also *Regola Rubertina: First and Second Part*, Eng. trans., ed. Hildemarie Peter (Berlin-Lichterfelde: Robert Lienau, 1977), pp. 58-63.

^e Barbour, p. 152; Kinney, "Bermudo," p. 101, gives .051 for the first fret factor.

^f Kinney, "Bermudo," p. 98.

^g Kinney, "Bermudo," p. 99, corrected; Barbour, p. 165, gives ratios that are the averages of Bermudo's two methods!

^h Vincenzo Galilei, *Dialogo della Musica Antica e della Moderna* (Florence, 1581), facs. ed. (New York: Broude, 1967), p. 49; Barbour, p. 57, agrees closely. This is the system commonly known as the "rule of 18."

ⁱ John Dowland, "Of Setting the Frets," in Robert Dowland, *Varieties of Lute Lessons* (London: T. Adams, 1610), fols. D2v-E1r.

proximates a pure mean-tone fret placement as proposed in this article. Experimentation with the historical fret placements in a limited musical repertoire and computing of frequency charts for each of them remains a future task. For now, let us look more closely at the possible use of a pure mean-tone temperament fret placement.

Since each fret controls pitches on more than one string, the fret positions chosen for mean-tone temperament placement are those that give the largest number of the normal accidentals in $\frac{1}{4}$ -comma mean-tone temperament, i.e., C sharp, E flat, F sharp, G sharp, and B flat. The actual frequencies produced at each fret on each string are shown in the following chart; for bass viol the frequencies would be half of those for treble.

Except for the circled problem notes which will be dealt with later, the open string tuning and fretted pitches of this system produce a $\frac{1}{4}$ -comma mean-tone temperament that is accurate to within .1 or .2 Hz. Accuracy may be tested by comparing octave and double-octave frequencies, as well as fretted notes on adjacent strings. The major departures from equal temperament fret placement are that frets 1 and 3 are placed farther from the nut and frets 4 and 6 closer to the nut, creating the two sizes of semitones in mean-tone temperament. This fret placement system corresponds exactly to Edgar Hoover's diagram,¹⁴ except that his positions 1-H and 6-L should be used, not 1-L and 6-L or 1-H and 6-H, as he advises.

To find the nut-to-fret distances for your instrument, multiply the sounding string length by each of the fret factors:

.065 .106 .164 .200 .252 .284 .331

A convenient way to experiment with the new fret placement is to tie on extra frets at these positions using heavy string or single strands of gut or nylon. It is important to emphasize that you must tune the open strings to the fretted unison note on the next lower string, or begin by tuning a pure third between the C and E strings and then sharp fourths between the other strings. (The fourths

¹⁴ Edgar M. Hoover, *A Manual of Viol Care* (Saratoga, Calif.: E. Hoover, 1976?), p. 11.

between the E and A strings of the bass viol should be a little more than two beats per second sharp at the common overtone e" sounded by harmonics at fret 7 on the A string and fret 5 on the E string, and proportionally for the other strings.) To begin tuning with C rather than our usual A is recommended by Bottrigari, Danoville, and Rousseau.¹⁵ Even better perhaps is to tune from the keynote of the piece to be played. Hubert le Blanc expresses this point emphatically:

The A which one gives for tuning, like the same saddle for every horse, is an absurdity; it is only good for playing in A. It is necessary to give C and its major or minor mediant [E or E flat] to play in C, etc.¹⁶

Beginning to tune with A is one of the many afflictions of nineteenth-century orchestral practice which needs to be discarded by early music performers. Not all the treatises agree on this point, though, for some say tune to A or that when playing with other instruments tune to A instead of the usual C.¹⁷

After moving the frets to the mean-tone position you may find that frets 5 and 7 seem to give pitches that are too sharp, especially on the upper two strings. As the stopping distance from the nut increases, non-scientific factors have more effect on the pitch (e.g., variations in string thickness and twist, increase in tension due to fingerboard clearance, age of string, finger pressure, height of fret, bridge angle, and other variables). These frets should be adjusted by ear to give only a slightly sharp fourth and slightly flat fifth. Since in most consort playing fret 7 is only used on the top string, it can be adjusted to give whatever size fifth you wish.

Assuming that the frets have now been moved to the mean-tone temperament position and the open strings placed in proper tune, what are the results in consort playing? Hopefully, those special moments of stable, in-tune triads with pure thirds will occur much more frequently. Some notes will seem melodically out of

¹⁵ Bottrigari, p. 48; Kinney, "Danoville's Treatise," p. 64f; Rousseau, p. 35.

¹⁶ Barbara Garvey Jackson, trans., "Hubert Le Blanc's *Défense de la Viole* (Amsterdam, 1740)," *Journal of the Viola da Gamba Society of America* XI (1974), p. 47.

¹⁷ Rousseau, p. 38.

tune to your equal-tempered ears because of the two sizes of semi-tones, but they will harmonize much better with the other notes of the chord. The major triads on C, D, E flat, F, G, A, and B flat will be more purely in tune because of the pure major third and the flatter fifths will be barely noticeable. The minor triads on

Major Triads in Mean-tone

(C#, E^b, F#, G#, B^b as accidentals)

The image shows three systems of musical notation, each representing a major triad on a three-stringed viol (Treble, Tenor, Bass strings).
 1. Triad C, F, G: The C is on the Treble string (first fret), F is on the Tenor string (first fret), and G is on the Bass string (first fret). The C and F are circled.
 2. Triad B^b, E^b, F: The B^b is on the Treble string (first fret), E^b is on the Tenor string (first fret), and F is on the Bass string (first fret). The B^b and E^b are circled.
 3. Triad A, D, E: The A is on the Treble string (first fret), D is on the Tenor string (first fret), and E is on the Bass string (first fret). The A and D are circled.

○ = problem notes (too high)

C, C sharp, D, E, F sharp, G, A, and B, although less precisely tunable, will be more purely in tune due to the pure third between the third and fifth of the triad (the minor third in mean-tone is wider than in equal temperament). These major and minor triads form 95% of the consort music we play, so if their tuning is more pure then our playing in general will be more purely in tune. If desired the flat fifths can be brought in tune on long notes or important chords by rolling the finger a bit over the fret; that is the main adjustment needed, aside from the problem notes to be discussed below.

Although your consort playing should be better in tune now (perfection remains an impossibility), a few problems persist. On Frequency Chart No. 3 the circled first fret notes on the C string and the G string are too high in pitch for the needed C sharp and G sharp; instead the pitches are D flat and A flat. On the bass

viol the problem is not serious, since those notes rarely occur as thirds above the root of a triad (A or E triads) or as octaves below a higher C sharp or G sharp; thus their position as a pure third is not critical (but see measure 10 of Dowland, "Lachrimae Amantis"). One solution which is easily handled on the treble viol and is also possible on the bass is to play those notes on the sixth fret of the next lower string where the proper pitch is produced; this is the viol's equivalent of the split keys found on early keyboard instruments. On the treble viol it is possible to roll the finger back far enough to lower the pitch the required amount. Another solution derived historically from John Dowland¹⁸ and Thomas Mace,¹⁹ among others, is suggested by their recommendation that the first fret on lutes and viols be thicker or fatter than the other frets. If the first fret is thicker and therefore higher, it is possible to raise the pitches produced on that fret by pressing harder on the string. Thus one could leave the first fret back in an intermediate or equal temperament position and use less pressure for C sharp and G sharp and more pressure for D flat and A flat to give the proper pitches for those notes in mean-tone temperament. A further intriguing solution to the first fret problem is related to recent research by Theron McClure of Ohio State University and Michael Morrow in England.²⁰ They have concluded from iconographic evidence that perhaps most sixteenth-century viol playing was done in high positions on the upper (three?) strings of long-necked, low-pitched viols. A typical consort might consist of instruments that today we would call tenors, basses, and great basses being played only on the upper three or four strings. This possibility eliminates most problems of the first fret on the fourth and fifth strings of our treble and bass viols, since these strings would rarely be used.

On the tenor viol the G sharp on the top string is a similar problem note; its pitch is actually A flat and therefore too high for a G sharp. In addition to playing the G sharp on the D string and

¹⁸ John Dowland, "Of Setting the Frets," fol. E1r.

¹⁹ Thomas Mace, *Musick's Monument* (London, 1676), repr. ed. (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1958), Vol. I, p. 68.

²⁰ Theron McClure, "One Hundred Seventy Viols," *Violone V* (1977), p. 106; Michael Morrow, "16th-Century Ensemble Viol Music," *Early Music* II/3 (July 1974), 160-163.

the solution of the thick first fret, the use of the tenor viol tuned in A instead of G is a further possibility. The tenor viol in A (A d g b e' a') was even more common than the tenor viol in G, yet it is rarely used today. The A tuning eliminates the high G sharp problem, but leaves a middle G sharp problem note on the g string and an E flat-D sharp problem on the b string. The player can seek the best solution for himself.

As can be seen, the most problematical string on the tenor viol in G is the f string. With mean-tone fret placement two of the first three notes on that string give the wrong pitches: a high F sharp and G sharp. The best solution is to tune the f string to e; the pitches will be compatible with mean-tone temperament like those on the bass viol e string. A precedent for this is Mersenne's mention of a contratenor viol with the third between the fourth and fifth strings,²¹ although he was referring to a contratenor tuned in C. This altered tenor viol tuning also makes it easier for treble and bass viol players to adapt to tenor viol playing.

In compositions that require some of the more unusual accidentals, certain other modifications should be followed. If the consort piece contains a D sharp, or A sharp, or A flat, or an enharmonic accidental, special tuning of the necessary string or shifting of a fret might be done before playing. D sharp and A sharp most often occur in pieces with A as tonal center and without an enharmonic E flat or B flat.²² The notes could be played up on a lower string (sixth fret) or on the usual string with the first fret moved back toward the nut. In any case players should look over their parts ahead of time and make necessary prior adjustments or be prepared to modify their finger position at the proper moment.

Consort pieces notated with three flats in the signature (in C minor) occur with some regularity in the English repertoire. Usually an A flat is required and often also a D flat (see works in the *Jacobean Consort Music* volume beginning on pages 30, 40, 69,

²¹ Mersenne, p. 261.

²² For instance, in *Jacobean Consort Music*, aside from the works which require equal temperament, d sharp'' occurs 20 times, d sharp' occurs 33 times, d sharp occurs only 3 times, and a sharp' occurs 5 times.

105, 119, 149, 163, and 164). If the enharmonic notes G sharp and C sharp are also required in the same octave in the same part it is best to move the fret involved to a midway point from which the pitch can be adjusted in either direction. It may be that these works are intended to be played at another notated pitch level, either transposed one whole tone higher (to D minor) or a fourth lower (to G minor). Such transpositions remove the need for A flat and D flat and make possible playing in mean-tone temperament with no fret adjustments.

To summarize, a list of steps toward playing in mean-tone temperament on viols may be given. Assuming equal temperament fret placement and open strings tuned to fretted unisons:

1. Adjust the pitches of notes by playing higher or lower on the frets (sharps should be lowered, flats raised, thirds of chords lowered).
2. Move frets 4 and 6 toward nut, and adjust the notes on frets 1 and 3.
3. Tune open strings with a pure third and sharper fourths, move frets 3, 4, and 6 to mean-tone position and adjust pitches on fret 1.
4. Move all frets to mean-tone position, tune open strings to fretted unisons, tune tenor viol with an e string, and adjust for problem notes on fret 1.

The mean-tone temperament fret placement remains to be tested more in practice and in theoretical detail. Will this fret placement work for some lyra viol tunings? Can the repertoire in which this fret placement may be used be better defined? Do the other historical fret placement systems work in a limited repertoire? Of course, this fret placement can be applied to all fretted instruments, so lutenists and guitarists are encouraged to experiment with it, keeping in mind that chordal playing using upper frets creates more complicated problems of intonation and fret placement, so that only more limited application of mean-tone

temperament fret placement will be satisfactory on those instruments.

It takes a good bit of work to make the Viols, all of which are in one group, accord well together.²³

²³ Bottrigari, p. 14.

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Music for the *Dessus* and *Pardessus de Violes*, Published in France, ca. 1650-1770

Adrian Rose

The following list of French solo and ensemble music for the *dessus* and *pardessus de violes* is based almost entirely on recent research at the *Bibliothèque Nationale* in Paris, where almost all the music listed may be seen. A number of other volumes are either in private possession or are contained in the collections of libraries elsewhere.

The list is divided into two sections: A, music, including *méthodes*, written specifically for the *dessus* and *pardessus de violes*; and section B, music specifying the use of these instruments as alternatives. A list of abbreviations used appears at the end of the article.

The music of Charles Dollé is among the finest in the repertoire. Unfortunately, very little is known about his life, except that within his volume of *Pièces de viole* (published in 1737, F Pn Vm⁷ 6294) for the bass viol, he is described as being a *Maître de viole*. It is probable that he was a pupil of Marais—the *tombeau* in the Suite in C minor (from *Pièces de viole*) bears the inscription “*de Marais le Père*.” The style of his compositions suggests that he was a player of considerable ability. Two of his volumes for the *pardessus de viole* have survived, as well as a set of *Sonates en trio* for two violins and bass (in which the bass part bears Dollé’s signature), and the book of *Pièces de viole* mentioned previously. His *deuxième livre* (1737, F Pn Vm⁷ 6304) entitled *Sonates, Duos et Pièces pour le Pardessus de viole* consists of three sonatas for solo *pardessus* and bass (numbers 1, 3 and 5), three sonatas for two unaccompanied *pardessus* (numbers 2, 4 and 6), and five pieces for solo *pardessus* and bass bearing descriptive titles. The first sonata in A minor is a particularly lovely work, as are the last five pieces. The fourth piece in the set, entitled *Les Regrets*, is a magnificent *rondeau* in the key of F minor, with short sections in B flat minor and E flat minor.

The music of Louis Heudeline, although in a very different style, is also fine. Particularly noteworthy is his *Premier livre de suites de pièces pour le dessus de viole avec la basse continue* (Paris,

1701, F Pn Vm⁷ 6276). It is dedicated to Monseigneur de Becdelievre, a nobleman of high standing, and a player of the *dessus de viole*. Within the *avertissement* he describes the way in which one should interpret the ornaments, and also lists the signs by which he denotes them. Rather unusually, his sign for the *tremblement* is a *t*. There are three long suites—number one in D minor, number two in A major, and number three in G minor. Each concludes with an extended chaconne or movement entitled *Sonate* in which the solo viol is treated in a brilliant and often virtuosic fashion. Roger of Amsterdam printed a second edition of this volume in 1708, which, according to the title page, is “*Corrigée par l’Auteur de quantité de fautes qui se sont glissées dans l’édition de Paris*.”

The works of Louis de Caix d’Hervelois, Joseph Bodin de Boismortier and Thomas Marc show the characteristic grace and charm associated with French music during the mid-eighteenth century. Caix d’Hervelois should not be confused with a certain *Monsieur de Caix* who also wrote music for the *pardessus de viole*.

One detects some Italian influence in the sonatas of Barrière and Blainville, which is understandable since both composers studied in Italy and published their music in Paris only after they returned. The sonatas are in a florid and virtuosic style much associated with Italian violin music of the period.

Section A

- Barrière, Jean. *Sonates pour le Pardessus de Viole avec la Basse Continue. Cinquième livre*. Paris, 1739. F Pn.
- Blainville, Charles Henri de. *Premier livre de Sonates pour le dessus de viole avec la Basse Continue dédiée à Mademoiselle Adelaide D*. Paris, ca. 1750. GB Lbm, NL DHgm.
- Boismortier, Joseph Bodin de. *Six sonates pour le pardessus de viole avec la basse. Soixante-unième oeuvre*. Paris, 1736. PP.
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- Caix, Barthelmy de. *Six sonates pour deux pardessus de violes à cinq cordes. Première oeuvre*. Lyon, ca. 1745. F Pn, GB Lbm.
- Caix d’Hervelois, Louis de. *Cinquième livre de pièces pour un pardessus de viole à cinq et six cordes avec la basse. Dixième oeuvre*. Lyon, 1753. F Pn.

- Caix d'Hervelois, Louis de. *Sixième livre de pièces pour un pardessus de viole à cinq et six cordes avec la basse, contenant trois suites qui peuvent se jouer sur la flûte. Neuvième oeuvre.* Paris, 1751. F Pn.
- Corrette, Michel. *Méthode pour apprendre facilement à jouer du pardessus de viole à cinq et à six cordes avec des Leçons à II et III parties.* Paris, 1749. F Pn.
- Danoville. *L'Art de toucher le dessus et basse de violle.* Paris, 1687. B Br.
- Dollé, Charles. *Sonates, Duos et Pièces pour le Pardessus de viole. On peut jouer ce livre sur la viole, violon ou flûte Allemande. Quatrième oeuvre.* Paris, 1737. F Pn.
- Dollé, Charles. *Sonates à deux pardessus de violes sans Basse. On peut les jouer Également sur deux violons. Sixième oeuvre.* F Pn.
- Dumont, Henri. *Dances pour les violes et orgue. (Deux dessus et basse de viole.)* [within *Meslanges*] *Livre II.* Paris, 1657. F Pn, GB Lbm.
- Heudeline, Louis. *Premier livre de suites de pièces pour le dessus de viole avec la basse continue.* Paris, 1701. F Pn, second edition GB DRc.
- Heudeline, Louis. *Second livre de pièces pour le dessus et basse de viole et pour le violon et Clavessin, trios et sonates.* Paris, 1705. F Pn.
- Hugard, (Pierre?). *'La Toilette.' Pièces nouvelles pour le pardessus de viole à cinq cordes.* [with *basso continuo*] Paris, ca. 1750. F Pn. NL DHgm.
- Marais, Marin. *Pièces en Trio pour les Flûtes, Violons, et Dessus de Violes.* Paris, 1692. F Pn, GB DRc, GB Lbm (incomplete).
- Marc, Thomas. *Suite de pièces de dessus et de pardessus de viole et trois sonates avec les basses continues, qui se peuvent jouer sur la viole, la flûte traversière et autres instruments. Premier livre.* Paris, 1724. F Pn, GB Lbm. [This volume contains an interesting *avertissement* in which Marc explains the ornaments which, he says, are the same as those used by Marais. Later he says "I declare that I make it a glory to imitate him, not only for the ornaments, but also for the signs by which de denotes them."]

- Roget, Clair Nicholas. *Sonates pour deux Pardessus de Violes, Flûtes ou Violons. Première Oeuvre.* Paris, ca. 1739. F Pn.
- Rousseau, Jean. *Traité de la Viole.* Paris. 1687. F Pn, GB DRc, GB Lbm.
- Vibert, Pentionnaire du Roy, l'un de vingt-quatre de Sa chambre ordinaire de l'Académie Royale de Musique. *Trois suites d'Airs gratuits en trio pour deux pardessus de violes ou deux violons avec la Basse. Oeuvre III—V.* Paris, ca. 1750. F Pn.

Section B

- Asplmayr, (Franz). *Six duos pour deux violons ou pardessus de violes. Deuxième Oeuvre.* Paris, ca. 1760. F Pn.
- Atys. *Six sonates en duo en forme de conversation pour deux flûtes traversières qui peuvent facilement exécuter sur le violon et le pardessus de viole. Première Oeuvre.* Paris, ca. 1750. F Pn, US Wc.
- Atys. *Six sonates en duo, travaillées pour six instruments différens, flûte, hautbois, pardessus de viole à cinq cordes sans aucun démanchement, violon, basson et violoncelle. Quatrième oeuvre.* Paris, ca. 1750. GB Lbm.
- Avolio, J. *Sei duetti per due violini—ces duo se peuvent exécuter avec deux pardessus de violes, violons et violoncelles.* Paris, 1765. F Pn, S Skma.
- Blavel, Michel. *Recueil de pièces Petits airs, Brunettes, Menuets avec les doubles et variations accomdé pour les flûtes travers, violons et pardessus de violes.* Paris, ca. 1750. F Pn, GB Lbm.
- Bordet, *Recueil d'airs avec accompagnement de flûte ou violon ou pardessus de viole.* Paris, ca. 1750. F Pn, S Skma.
- Bordet. *Premier Recueil d'airs choisis dans les plus beaux opéra comiques, avec un accompagnement ajusté pour la flûte, le violon ou le pardessus de viole.* Paris, ca. 1750. F Pn NL DHgm, US NYp. *Deuxième Recueil.* D brd (Rp), GB Lbm, NL DHgm. *Troisième Recueil.* F Pc.
- Bouin, F. *Les Muses. Suites à deux vieilles ou musettes avec la basse. Ces suites sont gravées de façon quelles peuvent se jouer avec agrément sur les violons, flûtes, hautbois et pardessus de violes. Première oeuvre.* Paris, ca. 1750. F Pn.
- Buterne, Charles. *Six sonates pour la vielle, musette, violon, flûte hautbois et pardessus de viole; quatre avec la basse continue et deux en duo. Deuxième oeuvre.* Paris, ca. 1740. F Pn, GB Lbm, F Nm.

- Caix d'Hervelois, Louis de. *Quatre suites pour la flûte traversière avec la basse. Qui conviennent aussi au pardessus de viole, dédié à Monsieur le Marquis de Saché. Sixième oeuvre.* Paris, 1736. F Pn, F Pa, F Dm.
- Cannée, de l'Académie Royale Musique. *Six sonates en trio pour deux violons ou deux pardessus de violes avec la basse continue.* Paris, ca. 1765. F Pn.
- Cardon. *Recueil Nouveaux de Pièces de différent auteurs pour deux Flûtes, Violons et Pardessus de violes.* Paris, ca. 1750. F Pn.
- Chamborn, Joachim Michau. *Sonates à violon seul et basse. Il y a plusieurs sonates dans ce oeuvre, qui peuvent se jouer sur la flûte traversière et sur le pardessus de viole et al dixième est à violoncelle obligez. Premier livre.* Paris, 1722. F Pn, GB Lbm.
- Chedeville, Nicholas. *Les Impromptus de Fontainebleau, pièces en deux parties et par accord pour les musettes, vielles, violons, pardessus de violes, flûtes traversières et hautbois. Douzième oeuvre.* Paris, ca. 1740. F Pn.
- Corrette, Michel. *Sonates pour deux flûtes ou pardessus de violes sans basse.* Paris, ca. 1740. GB Lbm, F Pn.
- Damoreau, L'aine. *Sonates à deux violons ou dessus de violes sans basse. Première oeuvre.* Paris, ca. 1760. F Pn.
- Dublan. *Les jolis airs contenant les plus belles ariettes de Blaise le Savatier et autre intermèdes pour deux violons ou pardessus de violes. Deuxième recueil.* Paris, 1765. F Pn.
- Dubois. *Le Pasteur Fidèle ou Les Délices de la Campagne. Sonates à deux parties pour deux musettes, vielles, pardessus de violes et autres instruments.* Paris, ca. 1740. GB Lbm.
- Dupuits, (J. B.) *Première suite d'amusemens duo pour les vieles, musettes, flûtes, hautbois, violons et pardessus de violes. Deuxième oeuvre.* Paris, 1760, F Pn.
- Enderlé, Premier violon de monseigneur le Prince d'Harmstat. *Six duos à deux violons ou deux pardessus de violes sans basse.* Paris, 1762/3. F Pn.
- Forqueray, Antoine. *Pièces de viole avec la basse continue . . . Livre premier. Ces pièces peuvent se jouer sur le pardessus de viole.* Paris, 1747, F Pn, GB Lbm.
- Guerini de Naples. *Six duos pour deux violons ou pardessus de violes, Op. V.* Paris, 1761. A Wn, F Pn.

- Guerini de Naples. *Six sonates à deux violons ou pardessus de violes. Op. IV.* Paris, ca. 1760. GB Lbm, I Nc, NL Uim, US Wc.
- Guignon, Jean Pierre. *Six trios pour trois flûtes, pardessus de violes: on peut les exécuter aussi avec trois dessus de différens instrumens. Dixième oeuvre.* Paris, ca. 1750. F Pn.
- Guillemant, Benoit. *Six sonates pour deux flûtes traversières sans basse qui peuvent se jouer à deux violons ou deux pardessus de violes. Deuxième oeuvre.* Paris, ca. 1760. F Pn.
- Jobert, Joseph. *Six duo nocturnes à deux violons ou pardessus de violes. Première oeuvre.* Lyon, ca. 1770. GB Lbm.
- Leloup. *Recueil des récréations de Polimic ou choix d'ariettes et airs tendres et légers avec accompagnement de violon, flûte, hautbois et pardessus de viol.* Paris, ca. 1765-70. GB Lbm, F Pn.
- Le Marchard. *Six suites d'airs en duo pour le tambourin, ces duo se peuvent exécuter sur la vielle, la musette, flûte traversière, autbois, pardessus de viole et autres instrumens.* Paris, ca. 1750. F Pn.
- Leone, Pietro. *Six duos pour deux violons qui peuvent se jouer sur la mandoline et sur le pardessus de viole.* Paris, 1766. F Pn, I Nc.
- Morel, Jacques. *Chaconne en trio [within Premier Livre de Pièces de Violle] pour une flûte traversière, une violle et la basse continue. Le dessus de cette chaconne se peut jouer avec un violon ou un dessus de viole.* Paris, 1709. F Pn.
- Rambach, Franz Xaver. *Six sonates pour deux violons ou pardessus de violes. Quatrième oeuvre.* Paris, ca. 1765. GB Lbm.
- Roget, Clair Nicolas. *Sonates à deux flûtes ou deux pardessus de violes. Troisième oeuvre.* Paris, 1739. F Pn.
- Roget, Clair Nicolas. *Six sonates pour deux flûtes traversières sans basses convenables aux violons, pardessus de violes ou autres instrumens.* Paris, 1739. F Pn.
- Taillart, Constant. *Quatrième recueil de pièces Françaises et Italiennes petits airs, Brunettes, Menuets Etc., avec doubles et variations, accomodés pour une Flûte Traversière, Violon, Pardessus de Viole etc., avec accompagnement de Violoncelle, Clavecin, etc.* Paris, ca. 1765. F Pn, GB Lbm.
- Tessarini, Carlo. *Trattimento musicale. Dueti a due violini o due pardessus de viole senza basso.* Paris, ca. 1750. GB Lbm.

Abbreviations

A Wn	Vienna, Österreichische National-Bibliothek Musiksammlung
B Br	Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale
D brd (Rp)	Regensburg, Proske Musikbibliothek
F Dm	Dijon, Bibliothèque Municipale
F Nm	Nîmes, Bibliothèque Municipale
F Pa	Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal
F Pc	Paris, Bibliothèque du conservatoire national de musique
F Pn	Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale
GB Lbm	London, British Museum
GB DRc	Durham, Cathedral Library
I Nc	Naples, Biblioteca del Conservatorio
NL DHgm	The Hague, Haags Gemeentemuseum
NL Uim	Utrecht, Instituut voor Muziekwetenschap der Rijksuniversiteit
PP	Private Possession
S Skma	Stockholm, Kungliga Musikaliska Akademien Bibliothek
US NYp	New York, New York Public Library
US Wc	Washington, Library of Congress

A Viol Bibliography

John Rutledge

This bibliography of literature on the viols, their history and development, their composers, players and music, reveals the scope and quality of the material that has been written about them. The largest bibliography available before this one was that in Hans Bol's study of the viola da gamba; it has been incorporated into this listing. Several factors have made the size of this bibliography more manageable. I did not have to include published music for the viols since that has already been available for several years in Robin de Smet's *Published Music for the Viola da Gamba and Other Viols* (Detroit: Information Coordinators, 1971). Nor does this bibliography include the contents of the first twelve volumes (1964-75) of the *Journal of the Viola da Gamba Society of America*: thanks to John Whisler, these items are now easily accessible. While I have attempted to cover the flowering of serious studies of the viols in dissertations and theses, I have not included works in progress.

The entries are arranged by broad subject categories. This facilitates the exploration of a given subject interest although it is not an ideal solution, since some articles contain information about several aspects of the viols. It is to be expected that a few items will have been placed in inappropriate categories since I was not able to examine each entry personally, and was obliged in some cases to rely on the work of others for bibliographical information. For the same reason, the amount of information and the form of citation do not match the most exacting standards of uniformity. I trust, however, that no title in the list is irretrievable in the present form.

The largest category is "General Descriptions and History of the Instruments." Herein are contained those works which portray the viols' history and development, or describe the various members of the viol family (including the baryton, but not the *viola d'amore*) from the earliest period to the present. Clearly it would be futile to list every book in which the word "viol" occurs, and a great many items of this type, particularly older histories of the violin family, have been omitted.

A second and related category (and fortunately one that is growing) is "Methods and Pedagogy." Other tutors will be found in De Smet's bibliography.

The third section, "Performance Practice," covers instrumentation, tunings, ornamentation, extempore playing, bows and bowing and a number of items on lyra-viol playing. Closely associated with the way we play viols is the interpretation and discussion of the music written for them. The study of viol music has concentrated on the music for consorts, while the French Baroque school was, until fairly recently, neglected.

Particularly important is the section "Design and Construction" of viols, since this field has for several reasons not been blessed with a rich literature. Even a casual perusal of this section reveals how much more might be written on how the instruments were and are built.

Related to viol building is a listing of some museum and exhibition catalogs which, I hope, will be useful for studying the proportion and appearance of old instruments. Such sources are extremely helpful for understanding what the eighteenth century would have termed "good taste." In this connection, a very interesting specialized bibliography has been compiled by Theron McClure. His "A Bibliography of the Iconography of the Viol" appears as Part II of the 1978 edition of *Violone* (The Violone Center, 619 Northridge Road, Columbus, Ohio 43214).

The compiler of this bibliography welcomes corrections and additions to the list. They should be addressed to me at 1919 West Club Blvd., Durham, North Carolina 27705.

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Methods and Pedagogy

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Reviews:

Robert Donington. *String Playing in Baroque Music*. London: Faber, 1977. 126 p.; 26 cm. With recorded illustrations by Yehudi Menuhin, violin; George Malcolm, harpsichord; and Robert Donington, bass viol.

In this work, Robert Donington presents violinists (chiefly), cellists and gambists with a practical guide to solving the performance problems confronting them in the attempt to perform baroque music in an authentic and musically satisfying manner. Perhaps the best way to demonstrate the value of this beautifully written, handsomely produced book is to quote from its table of contents. The work is divided into four parts. The first part, The Approach, contains chapters on Baroque Fiddling for Modern Fiddlers, The Baroque Violin, and Departing from the Baroque Violin. Part two, The Technique, contains the following: How Much Bow? What Part of the Bow? Bowings on the String, Bowings off the String, Notes under a Slur, Other Nuances of Bowing, and Left Hand Coloring. Part three, The Expression, is further divided into Baroque Expression in General, Tempo in Baroque Music, Rhythm in Baroque Music, and Ornamenting in Baroque Music. The fourth and final section is an explanation of the recorded illustrations, and the work concludes with a reading list and an index.

Donington is careful to emphasize the important fact that the principles he presents are intended to be applied only to music from approximately 1650 to 1750, and should not be construed as applicable to earlier music. Indeed, all his examples involve a thoroughbass, hence excluding the viol consort. Despite indications in the index, his references to cello playing are only to be assumed from what is said about the violin, much of which, at least in this writer's experience, cannot be taken for granted as being equally applicable to the cello in all cases. While it is true, as Donington states (p. 17) that "the baroque cello was held between the calves of the legs, without an end-pin," this practice was not universal either for the cello or the bass viol, for illustrations survive showing it played with an endpin or supported on a low foot stool. Despite the intentionally limited scope of application to which Donington adheres in this work, it is regrettable that he

was unable to find room to present his views on continuo playing by the gambist or cellist.

The recording forms a most valuable adjunct to Donington's book. The first side presents brief excerpts from various works, some of which are played in two ways, or on two different violins. The second side presents two complete works: Corelli's Violin Sonata in D major, and the G minor Chaconne by Purcell. Here the superb artistry of Yehudi Menuhin provides the listener with highly convincing musical realizations of the principles enunciated in Donington's text. Menuhin is most effectively and imaginatively accompanied on the harpsichord by George Malcolm. Donington himself reinforces the bass line on the viol, but regrettably the recording engineers did not see fit to make his performance more audible in general instead of merely a note now and then in the Purcell work. Of course, in the case of the Corelli work, the composer intended it to be accompanied by a violoncello rather than a gamba, the latter having become obsolete in Italy as early as the mid-seventeenth century.

Despite the few reservations about Donington's work voiced above, the present writer has no hesitation in warmly recommending it to all string players interested in playing baroque music. It will be an item in their reference library deserving of frequent and careful consultation.

Gordon J. Kinney

John Jenkins. *Consort Music for Viols in Four Parts*. Edited by Andrew Ashbee. London: The Viola da Gamba Society of Great Britain, Faber Music Ltd., 1978.

This handsome and practically designed set of books (string parts, organ part and full score) continues the series of Jenkins publications undertaken by Faber in conjunction with the Viola da Gamba Society of Great Britain. It is their third volume, and adds to the six-part and five-part consort music what is perhaps the most valuable set of Jenkins' four-part music—the seventeen fantasias and two pavans preserved complete in Oxford, Bodleian MS Mus. Sch. c. 99. These three sets have not previously been available

in their entirety, and the importance of this publishing venture can hardly be overstressed.

The wording of the title *Consort Music for Viols in Four Parts* might seem to rule out the possibility that these works could be performed by a consort of the violin family. There can be little doubt that, by and large, the viol consort is the most suitable medium of performance, but it may be worth pointing out the non-committal attitude of the copyist of c. 99, whose title reads: *Mr. Jenkins his 4 parte Fantasies* and who entitles his five books "Treble," "Altus," "Tenor," "Base," and "Organ Part." As Dr. Ashbee says in his introduction, "an almost violinistic turn is given to some pieces;" and one could go further than this, and postulate performance by a violin consort of some of the pieces near the end of the collection, in which the music is "mostly vigorous and distinctly extrovert."

For those who would study the development of the English four-part fantasia, this volume provides most welcome evidence in print of Jenkins' vital contribution during that almost uncharted period of some thirty years between the deaths of Coprario (1626), Ferrabosco and Lupo (1628); and the composition of Locke's six "sets" of "suites" of airs for four viols (or violins!) in the 1650's or 1660's, followed by Purcell's fantasias of 1680, the greater number of which are in four parts. Dr. Ashbee, in his stimulating and well-reasoned introduction, draws attention to one fact that affects the dating of these Jenkins fantasias. Two of them (numbers 5 and 6) were copied by John Merro of Gloucester, who died in 1639, while the string parts of the last pieces to be added to the collection (numbers 15 to 17) were copied on a different paper from the rest. He suggests they may have been written for use at Kirtling some time before the North family collection of music was dispersed from there in December of 1666.

The fantasias in the present Jenkins volume, like those of Locke and Purcell, are written for a group comprising treble, alto or tenor, tenor, and bass—not for the commonly-preferred alternative of two trebles, tenor, and bass. Jenkins' fantasias are characterized by unified structure, a classical sense of form, ingenious and melodious counterpoint, and a feeling for harmonic adventure which carries Jenkins (in numbers 7 and 15) around the circle of keys with a technique similar to the daring modulations of Purcell.

Dr. Ashbee's previous volume of Jenkins' four-part music—*Musica Britannica* vol. XXVI, to which he does not refer in the present volume—contained only five of the fantasias contained in c. 99, and he is greatly to be congratulated on now editing and publishing the complete set. There are a few points in the editing that seem to call for comment.

Changes of time signature are introduced in five of the fantasias—but are these changes really necessary? In number 2, the change from 4/2 to 4/4 and back to 4/2 seems quite plausible, but it does suggest a particular interpretation of tempo in a piece in which, as usual, there is no indication of a change in tempo. Number 8 proceeds in the opposite direction—4/4 changes to 4/2 and back to 4/4. There seems no reason to change to 4/2 at measure 29, but it is at measure 37 that the harmonic unit becomes the half note rather than the quarter. With number 12 the time signature, having changed from 4/4 to 4/2 at measure 58, should change back to 4/4 at measure 70. In numbers 15 and 16 the signature might as well be 4/4 throughout. In fact, contemporary evidence on barring, as far as it goes, suggests that 4/4 (or 2/2) is generally preferable. In the manuscript source of number 15, the bass part has 4/4 barring beginning at the entry in measure 27 and continues to the end, presumably added by a player for convenience. No barlines occur elsewhere in this manuscript, though they might have been expected in numbers 8 and 16 where passages involving sixteenth notes are found. Barring in 4/4 occurs fairly frequently in manuscripts of consort music, but 4/2 barring does not, except in organ parts where the vertical lines often were ruled before the music was copied, and the copyist tried to get as much music as he could between two vertical rules.

With key indications and accidentals, Dr. Ashbee successfully straightens out the puzzling (to modern players) notational problems of numbers 7 and 15; but was it necessary to add an A flat to the signature of numbers 3, 7 and 8?

A vexing question arises as to what size of viol should be used for the two middle parts of these fantasias—alto and tenor, or two tenors? Dr. Ashbee advises an empirical solution based on the respective *tessitura* of the two middle parts. I feel that the evidence of the clefs used in the manuscripts cannot be disregarded. A C clef on the second line (C2) is used for the "alto" part in all the

fantasias except numbers 10, 11 and 12, where the C clef on the middle line (C3) is used for both inner parts. The implication is that two tenor viols should be used in these three fantasias and an alto and a tenor in the remainder—not so much because of the compass of the parts as for considerations of color. It is really worth while to obtain, and if necessary to build, an alto or perhaps a small tenor viol so as to have four different sizes of viol in playing most of these pieces. It can be tuned a tone above the normal tenor or a tone below the treble. Of course, this is a refinement, and it is possible, as Dr. Ashbee says, to play all the works using two tenors.

The work of the copyists is not always as good as it looks, and occasional consecutives do occur in even the best manuscripts. In number 3, measure 48, Dr. Ashbee points out the parallel fifths in his textual commentary, but does not correct them in the music. In the final cadence of number 16, consecutive octaves appear between treble and alto, giving a very tame conclusion to an exciting, well-structured work. A table of contents and a bibliography would have enhanced the value of the publication; but such omissions hardly detract from the excellence of this really beautiful, typographically pleasing and carefully edited set of books which viol players will rate among their most treasured possessions.

Donald Peart

Philip Ledger, ed. *The Oxford Book of English Madrigals*. London: Oxford University Press, 1978. 404 p.; 22 cm.

It is both unusual and exciting to become acquainted with a book such as this, which combines scholarly integrity with convenience and practicality for performers—qualities still rare in the area of renaissance vocal music. This greatly needed work is the most comprehensive one-volume depository of Elizabethan and Jacobean madrigals yet published. Ledger has selected not only the well known madrigals, but also particularly outstanding lesser known works as well, thus saving the beginner many hours of searching through the volumes of Fellowes' *English Madrigal School* or other sources. Finally, it is a fresh revision of these works derived from primary sources, rather than from the transcriptions of others.

The thoroughness of the performance editing of this book is a necessary fruit of the perspective a performer of Ledger's caliber can yield. Along with many other recording accomplishments as conductor and pianist, Ledger has preserved thirty-five of these sixty madrigals with the fine vocal group Pro Cantione Antiqua (also available through Oxford University Press). Ledger's considerations for the performer or conductor include stating the range of each voice part in each composition, transposition of some of the madrigals to provide a consistent tessitura for each voice from madrigal to madrigal, and some sort of characterizing performance direction such as "eagerly" or "not too fast and with elegance." In dealing with *proportio tripla* Ledger employs a notational procedure for tempo modulations that has been used in contemporary composition for the last twenty-five or more years, and one the present reviewer hopes will be more commonly used in transcriptions of renaissance vocal pieces. An example is his transcription of John Farmer's "Fair Phyllis I Saw." In measures 31-40 (page 109) Farmer has begun in 2/2, then introduces two measures in 3/4, returns to 2/2 for one measure, has six more measures of 3/4, then a lengthy 2/2, and so on. Two 3/4 measures equal one 2/2 measure. Each transition is marked [$\leftarrow \text{♩} - \text{♩} \rightarrow$], going from 2/2 to 3/4, and [$\leftarrow \text{♩} - \text{♩} \rightarrow$] for the reverse case. Here there is no ambiguity regarding either the "feel" of the transition or which of the two note values in the brackets belongs to the old meter or the new.

The madrigals have been newly transcribed into modern notation, and the final six pages of the book give a thorough account of the editorial method used in their preparation. This includes a list of printed and manuscript sources which help to clarify problems of text underlay and the absence of some accidentals in the printed editions. Capitalization, spelling, and punctuation are from the third edition of Fellowes' *English Madrigal Verse, 1583-1632, from the Original Song Books*, revised and enlarged by Frederick W. Sternfeld and David Greer (Oxford University Press, 1967). In the critical commentary by text editor Andrew Parker, inconsistencies between printed and manuscript sources are noted, and Parker also explains the procedure for wrong notes in a printed source when there is no manuscript. Editorial notes specific to the individual madrigals are grouped in the order of the pieces in the book.

In his preface, editor Ledger states that his three assumptions toward selection were to have major composers, such as Byrd, Gibbons, Morley, Tomkins, Weelkes, and Wilbye each represented by several works; to have one or more works by less famous composers, such as Bennett, East, Wautor, and Ward; but not to have a work by a minor figure if it is below the level of the other represented madrigals. This high standard of scholarship is maintained throughout all editorial decisions and responsibilities. Ledger brings a subtle balance of skill and abstention to the placing of performance markings, impeccable taste to the selection of representative works, and an open attitude to questions of personal taste, as is indicated in a thoughtful disclaimer in the preface. The book is also beautifully and ruggedly bound, and by inflationary standards is modestly priced for all that it is worth. This reviewer can express only the highest regard for this new volume and recommends it completely to anyone with interest and experience in the late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century English madrigal.

Timothy W. Duncan

The 250th Commemoration of Marin Marais. The Oberlin Baroque Ensemble, with James Weaver, Harpsichord; and August Wenzinger, viols. Gasparo GS-202 (Gasparo Co., P. O. Box 90574, Nashville, TN 37209).

If the analogy can be made that the contributions of Marais to the literature and technique of the viol are in some way similar to Chopin's contributions to the piano, then this recording must reflect the interpretation of these works by the "Rubinsteins" and "Horowitzes" of the viol. Most of us are familiar with the reputation of August Wenzinger as a performer on the viol for more than fifty years, as a teacher at some of the world's most prestigious institutions, as a first-class scholar, and as director of many recordings for Deutsche Gramophon's *Arkiv* series. Appearing with Wenzinger on this recording is harpsichordist James Weaver, Director of Concerts in the Music Division of the Smithsonian; and Oberlin Baroque Ensemble members Marilyn McDonald (baroque violin), Robert Willoughby (baroque flute), James Caldwell (viola da gamba), Catharina Meints (viola da gamba), and Lisa Goode

Crawford (harpsichord). The performers have all served as faculty members at the distinguished Baroque Performance Institute held at the Oberlin Conservatory each summer since 1972. The contents of the recording are the *Pièces à trois violes* in G major from *Livre IV*, *Pièces à une et trois violes* (1717); two *Pièces de viole d'un goût Étranger* (*Livre IV*), the *Pièces en trio* in E minor of 1692, and the *Sonnerie de Ste. Geneviève du Mont de Paris* (1723).

This reviewer can only think of superlatives to describe the playing of this music. There are several points which deserve special mention. The performance of the many ornaments seems completely effortless, allowing them to take on their true role as ornaments and not to sound forced or overly virtuosic or to obscure the melodic line. The performers' tasteful use of limited vibrato is likely to satisfy all but the most radical on either side of the vibrato controversy. The tempos are very convincing—neither too fast nor too slow. This is especially in evidence in the *Sonnerie*, which is here performed slightly faster than in other recordings, resulting in an entrancing, hypnotic performance of this ostinato piece which could, in less able hands, easily become boring. Catharina Meints extracts a very good bell effect from the bass viol in this piece. In the *Pièces en trio* in E minor, Wenzinger displays his mastery of the treble viol by producing an unusual richness of tone in the lower register of the instrument, and by frequently matching the tone quality of Willoughby's flute.

In addition to the fine performances, the disc itself is a well-made product. The copy received for review is a flawless pressing—an item becoming increasingly rare these days. The balance is good, although perhaps a bit more volume would be welcome from the harpsichord. The tone quality is rich and satisfying, leading one to speculate that the recording engineers may have taken the time to grasp a basic concept of the ideal sound of the viols. This product of a small new company compares favorably with those of the major European and American recording companies. The jacket notes by Mary Anne Ballard are helpfully informative and interesting.

There are, of course, a few minor considerations which could have made this recording even better. There are a number of accent marks missing from the French titles, the inclusion of timings on the recording would have been an aid to programmers of classical music

radio stations, and the inclusion of a Library of Congress catalog card number would have been a time-saver for librarians. The cover art, "Foliage III" by Abigail Hadly, is attractive and colorful but does not relate to the contents of the recording. Aside from these admittedly minuscule criticisms, this recording is highly recommended, and this reviewer eagerly awaits future Gasparo releases.

John A. Whisler

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